

Sample Chapter

The Write Stuff: Paragraphs, 1/e

Sims

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Critical Thinking in Writing and Reading



Moieties: Eagle and Raven on Blue Ice

Zoe Close

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this chapter, you will learn

LO1 What critical thinking is and why it is important

LO2 What critical thinking tools you can use to write well

THINKING CRITICALLY

Look at the picture above. Then answer the questions that follow.

1. On first glance, what strikes you in this image? What is your eye drawn to?

2. Now take a closer look, paying attention to each detail of the photograph. How do the individual parts of the photo (the glacier, the birds, the sky, the water) come together to make an overall image that blends or contrasts shapes and colors? How can breaking down the parts of an image or a reading help you get a better understanding of the overall message?

LO 1 CRITICAL THINKING

Critical thinking is a term you will hear quite a bit in college because it refers to the kind of thinking you'll be asked to do in your courses and later in your career. You'll be happy to know that you are already a critical thinker! You use your critical thinking skills every day. Whenever you make a decision, solve a problem, or prioritize tasks, you are using critical thinking. For instance, when you choose your classes each term, you have to think carefully about your schedule. What classes are open this term? Which classes count toward my degree or certificate goals? How many classes can I take in one term and still be successful? Which classes are most important for me to take first? Engaging in the process of making these decisions, weighing the choices, and prioritizing all involve critical thinking. Even on a day-to-day basis, you engage your critical thinking skills. When you shop for groceries, when you decide which bills you should pay first on a limited budget, when you work out problems and arguments between you and your friends or you and your coworkers, you are being a critical thinker.

This chapter provides you with critical thinking tools and tips designed to help you read and write analytically. (When you analyze, you break down ideas into their basic parts and work out how they relate to each other.) These tools will also aid you in evaluating your reading and writing processes. Critical thinking skills are essential for effective reading and writing. Good thinking and good writing go hand in hand. In fact, the word *critical* comes from the Greek word *kritikos*, meaning “to question or to analyze.” Many teachers and experts today emphasize the importance of critical thinking in college courses.

Various experts define critical thinking differently, but **critical thinking** is always a process that involves actively thinking through and evaluating all the steps in your thinking process or the thinking process of others. You must also be aware of any biases or assumptions (see page 15) you have and how they affect your conclusions.

Critical thinking skills are essential for good analytical reading and clear, fair-minded analytical writing. You can use critical thinking skills to understand and evaluate the writings of others and to discover the strengths and weaknesses in their arguments. As you learn and practice these skills, your own thinking and writing will improve. Develop the habit of a step-by-step process of thinking about each part of an argument or idea. Once you get hooked on the power that comes from using your critical thinking skills, you may not be able to stop—you will find yourself using them everywhere: while reading the newspaper, listening to the radio, reading a novel, even watching a movie.



Think of each step in the critical thinking process as a domino in a long line of dominoes set up to fall in a certain pattern and to end in a specific place. Knock over one domino, and it will knock over the next. But if one domino is out of place, it will keep all the others that follow it from falling correctly. In the same way, one error in your reasoning can throw off your whole chain of thinking and interrupt the flow and logic of your ideas. So line up each step in your critical thinking process carefully: Weigh each piece of evidence you provide, your reasons and conclusions, and make sure no point you make is out of line. Otherwise, your chain of thought and evidence will be thrown off and your end result will be derailed. You want your dominoes to fall into place perfectly, one idea sparking the next: a perfect process.

LO 2

CRITICAL THINKING TOOLS

The following critical thinking tools are used throughout this textbook to help you evaluate your thinking, reading, and writing processes; to explore your ideas, arguments, and conclusions; and to analyze the arguments and writing decisions of other writers. The icons (pictures) that accompany these key critical thinking tools alert you to when they are being used in the text and remind you when to use them yourself as you read selections and practice your writing skills.

These critical thinking terms are essential to the critical thinking process, but they are also the tools of argument. *Most college writing contains some level of argument:* You always have a purpose to explain and illustrate for your reader.

Now read the following explanations of each of these terms and the questions related to them that you should ask yourself as you read and write in order to think more critically and analyze more thoroughly.

CRITICAL THINKING TOOLBOX

Icons	Critical Thinking Terms	Definitions	Writing Terms
 (BLUEPRINTS/PLANS)	Purpose	What you want to say about your topic: the point(s) you are making. The purpose is the plan or blueprint for what you want to say in your essay.	Thesis statement
 (SUPPORT/BEAMS)	Ideas	The foundation for your argument: Ideas develop your purpose. They form the structure of your overall sentences (beams), develop your thesis (plans), and hold up your conclusion.	Topic sentences
 (NAILS)	Support	Examples, details, and evidence illustrate the ideas you use to support your purpose. They provide support (nails) for the ideas (beams) that support your purpose.	Major and minor details
 (TAPE MEASURE)	Assumptions and Biases	Assumptions (information you take for granted) and biases (personal beliefs you have about particular topics) need to be carefully measured for accuracy and validity. Always evaluate them when making an argument.	
 (FINISHED HOUSE)	Conclusions	The results of your argument or purpose. The result of carefully building your argument (using plans, beams, and nails) is a well-thought-out conclusion (house).	Conclusion
 (CAMERA)	Point of View	How you see the subject you are discussing, your particular view, like looking through a camera lens and seeing a specific version of an image	
 (MAGNIFYING GLASS)	Analysis	Breaking down an idea and working out the meaning of the individual parts and how they relate to the whole: like looking at something through a magnifying glass to see in detail all the parts it is made up of	

**PURPOSE**

1. **Purpose.** Purpose is your reason for writing a paragraph or essay. It is what you want to explain or prove to your readers. It should be stated in the topic sentence of a paragraph or the thesis sentence in an essay. Everything else you include in a piece of writing should develop that purpose.

When you read, ask yourself:

- What is the author's purpose for writing?
- What argument(s) is the author putting forth?
- What direct or implied questions is he or she addressing?

When you write, ask yourself:

- What is my purpose in this writing assignment?
- What is my argument for this topic?
- What conclusion(s) have I reached related to it?
- How will I argue this conclusion or these conclusions?

**IDEAS**

2. **Ideas and Information.** You develop your purpose using your own ideas, personal knowledge, and information. Later, you develop these ideas using examples, ideas, details, and commentary.

When you read, ask yourself:

- What ideas does the author include to support his or her purpose?
- What background information does he or she provide?

When you write, ask yourself:

- What ideas do I want to include to support my purpose?
- What background or personal information can I use to help develop my purpose?

**SUPPORT**

3. **Support.** You need to provide information to support your purpose. You can draw on your personal experiences or those of others, use facts and statistics you have researched, provide examples and specific details, or supply information provided by your instructor to support

your reasoning. Always evaluate the information provided by other writers. Include comments that explain the importance of the examples and details you provide.

When you read, ask yourself:

- What evidence or examples is the author using to support his or her reasoning?
- Are the examples and support believable and clearly explained?
- Do they adequately support the author's purpose?

When you write, ask yourself:

- What evidence or examples can I provide to back up my ideas?
- Are they believable and clearly explained?
- Do they support my purpose?



4. **Assumptions and Biases.** Be sure that the assumptions you or an author make about a topic or idea are not based on misinformation. Check for any biases in your thinking or that of an author. Any mistakes in the ideas that your reasoning is based on can cause problems in your argument. Although assumptions and biases can be well-founded, they must be measured for accuracy and logic.

When you read, ask yourself:

- Is there an error in the idea the author is explaining?
- Does the author include assumptions or biases that are flawed or unfair?

When you write, ask yourself:

- Is there an error in the idea I'm explaining?
- Are the assumptions I make or the biases I brought into thinking about my topic based on false information?



5. **Conclusions and Consequences.** The conclusion is the final point in your argument. Consequences are all the results of the conclusion you've made. For instance, if you argue that the music program should

be cancelled at your school and the money used to add more parking spaces on campus, be sure to address all the possible consequences of your position. The consequences could be a loss in the artistic identity of your school, fewer students who want to focus on music applying to your college, and so on.

When you read, ask yourself:

- What are the author's conclusions in this reading?
- Are the consequences of his or her arguments acceptable?

When you write, ask yourself:

- What are my conclusions in this paper?
- Are the consequences of my ideas acceptable and clearly thought out?

Back to the domino idea again: Think of the concluding argument in your writing not as the last domino falling over in the chain but as one near the end. The consequences of your argument are the last few dominoes that follow that one. They might not be directly stated in your paper: You'll have to imagine those last dominoes falling and what they mean. For instance, will canceling the music program lead to a decrease in enrollment and hurt the overall budget of the school and therefore the quality of the education it provides?



6. **Point of View.** Your point of view is your perspective on a topic. Be sure to check the assumptions your point of view is based upon are correct and unbiased.

When you read, ask yourself:

- What point of view does the author have on his or her topic?
- Did he or she consider other points of view that might be relevant?
- Is the point of view one-sided or biased?

When you write, ask yourself:

- What is my point of view on the topic?
- Have I considered other points of view that might be relevant?
- Is my point of view too biased for my intended audience?



7. **Analysis.** Analysis involves breaking down an idea and working out the meaning of its individual parts and how they relate to the whole. It is an in-depth look at every detail of an idea or argument, like using a magnifying glass to examine something up close and carefully.

When you read, ask yourself:

- What is the author saying?
- Does the author develop his or her ideas well using specific ideas, support, and analysis?

When you write, ask yourself:

- What ideas am I developing, and have I broken them down into all their separate parts?
- Do I develop all the ideas well using specific ideas, support, and analysis?

Using these critical thinking tools for reading and writing will help you focus on the basic parts of your written arguments. With practice, these skills will become an automatic and natural part of your reading and writing processes.

CRITICAL THINKING CHECKLIST

Using the critical thinking skills defined in this chapter will help you get into the habit of analyzing and evaluating the ideas and techniques you and other writers use to present arguments. Throughout this book, you will see critical thinking questions based on the concepts covered here. Be sure to use the general Critical Thinking Checklist that follows to evaluate your critical thinking process or the process of another writer.



CRITICAL THINKING CHECKLIST



PURPOSE

1. What is the *purpose* of this piece of writing? Is it clear?



IDEAS

2. What *ideas* and background information are provided to support the purpose of this piece of writing?



SUPPORT

3. What *evidence* and *examples* are used to explain and develop the ideas that support the argument made in this piece of writing? Are the evidence and examples provided sufficient?

ASSUMPTIONS
BIASES

4. Are there unfounded *assumptions* or unreasonable *biases*?



CONCLUSIONS

5. Are all of the *conclusions* and *consequences* of the argument (the results of the argument taken to their furthest extreme) considered?

POINT
OF VIEW

6. Is the *point of view* clear and consistent, and have other points of view been considered?



ANALYSIS

7. Using these critical thinking tools, *analyze* the overall structure of this essay and the strength of the author's argument, ideas, and support. Was the author successful in accomplishing the purpose? Why or why not?

CRITICAL THINKING IN ACTION

In order for critical thinking to become second nature, you need to practice using the tools described above in your writing and when you read. Practice these skills on the following reading.

ACTIVITY 1-1 Using the Critical Thinking Checklist

Directions: Review the critical thinking terms, and read the article “Does Johnny Really Need a Cell Phone?” Then, answer the seven questions in the Critical Thinking Checklist after the article.

READING

Does Johnny Really Need a Cell Phone?

Karen Haywood Queen

For Diane Matheson, the financial breaking point of keeping her teen in technology was the \$360 her daughter spent to download music and horoscopes onto her cell phone. For “Ellen,” who is too embarrassed to use her real name, it was back-to-back cell phone bills totaling \$1,100 for her daughter’s text messages and excess minutes.

Back when today’s parents struggled to join the “in” crowd, being cool meant wearing the right clothes and sneakers, having a phone in your room and listening to the right music on eight-track or cassette tapes. For this generation of teens and ‘tweens, the cost of being cool and connected has soared. Cell phones are the main expense: Teens, ‘tweens and younger kids want cell phones to talk to and text their friends. “It’s about being cool—having that cell phone so you can whip it out,” says Claudine Jala-jas, adding there’s no way her 10-year-old son is getting a cell phone anytime soon, despite his constant pleas. “When we were kids, we saw adults with cigarettes in their hands, and we thought that made you look cool. Now it’s cell phones.”

Have phone, will text

At one time, kids without cell phones were on the other side of a digital divide, based on a 2002 study by Context-Based Research Group in Baltimore. “Now, the real dividing line is whether you’re texting or not texting,” says Robbie Blinkoff, the principal anthropologist and managing director of Context. Parents end up feeling ambushed by high cell phone bills with charges for hundreds of minutes, thousands of texts and other options they didn’t even know existed. Keeping up with the Joneses’ cool kids has never been so costly. “Apparently, it is very expensive to have access to the Web,” Matheson says wryly. “That wasn’t explained to me. My daughter downloaded four songs, and those four songs cost me \$280. I was really upset. I canceled the service right away.”

“Does Johnny Really Need a Cell Phone?” by Karen Haywood Queen, from Bankrate.com, October 17, 2008. Copyright © 2011 by Bankrate, Inc. Reprinted with permission of Bankrate.com, N. Palm Beach, FL.

Unlimited headaches

The next company's plan offered Matheson's teen 200 minutes and unlimited texting for \$39.99 a month. But then a bill came for texting a five-digit code to get horoscopes—an additional \$80 in charges. "I didn't realize getting a cell phone was going to be so complex," Matheson says. "I didn't realize what was really involved. You'd think the phone companies would tell you these things."

Unfortunately, you have to know to ask about opt-out options. "Ellen" and her husband hit the roof when they got a \$500 phone bill for their daughter's excess minutes and texting. "She had sent over 3,000 text messages and spent almost 12 hours on the cell phone," Ellen says. "My husband checked on the next bill, which we hadn't gotten yet, and it was even higher—\$600. We told her she was going to have to pay it off." Matheson's and Ellen's girls are paying back their parents by baby-sitting and forking over birthday cash, but their families are footing the bills in the meantime. "Maybe I should take a second job," says a still-steaming Ellen. "Parents are doing ridiculous things to finance the status symbols of their children," says Marybeth Hicks, the author of *Bringing Up Geeks*.

Comparison-shop

Check price plans online before you go phone shopping, says Matheson, who found a better deal on the Internet after signing a contract at a carrier's brick-and-mortar store. Consider different service levels, options and charges for extra minutes and services. For example, Sprint offers a variety of voice, text, Web and other plans, company spokeswoman Emmy Anderson says.

There are two schools of thought on texting. One is that kids are going to send hundreds, even thousands of text messages anyway, so you might as well get unlimited texting. On the other hand, do you really want your child sending that many text messages? "One relative of mine sent 6,000 text messages the first month she had a cell phone," Hicks says. "If you send that many text messages, you're spending way too much time texting."

After you choose a plan, you can also check online to find out what parental control features your carrier has. If your carrier isn't listed, options listed by the other carriers will at least give you topics for conversation. "Carriers are offering tools to help parents encourage responsible cell phone use as well as protect kids from questionable content," says Shannon Nix, a spokeswoman for CTIA—The Wireless Association.

Set expectations, then check up

Phones are all about communication, so discuss your expectations about texting, minutes used, downloads and other issues with your child before

handing over a phone. “Talk to the child before getting the phone, about how you expect them to use the features, what you will or won’t be allowing,” Anderson says. “But sometimes that discussion comes after they get the first bill.” Then, check up on your child. “You can dial in and check, log in and check or do it right on the phone itself,” Anderson says. “If your child hasn’t had a cell phone before, checking on how the phone is used is a very good idea.”

Determine an age limit

Set an age or school grade for when your child can get a cell phone. At \$20 a month, that’s an extra \$240 in your savings account every year that you delay. In Hicks’ family, each child gets a cell phone the summer before freshman year of high school. “I don’t want a cell phone that lands in my wash,” she says. “That’s where a sixth-grader’s cell phone goes.” Blinkoff advocates waiting as long as possible. “There’s no need for the kids to have the things they have at the ages they have them,” he says.

Limit use by paying in advance. “Get a pay-as-you-go phone, not one that is on anybody’s family plan,” says a wiser Ellen. “Once you run out of those minutes, they’re gone. I don’t think kids today see things as being ‘gone.’ They think: ‘We can go buy some more. We can get unlimited.’ That’s sending the wrong message—that everything is free.”

Make them pay

Clear up that everything-is-free idea and be frank about costs.

“My kids used to say, ‘But the cell phone is free,’” Hicks says. “They were truly surprised that I had to sign a contract and pay every month. We can’t put our kids in a bubble and have them not know about the costs of things.” Have your child foot the bills for any extras, whether cell phone minutes or games or designer clothes. For some reason, \$20 of a child’s own money is worth more than \$20 out of Mom’s or Dad’s wallet. “Allowance really does help,” Jalajas says. “I’ll say, ‘That will cost 20 weeks of allowance.’ My policy is, I’m your mother, and I will provide you with everything you need—food, clothes, a home. Anything above and beyond that, which includes video games, you’ll pay for yourself.”


Buy pre-loved items

Jalajas’ son, who used to insist on all-new books and games, now realizes he can buy a used computer game for \$10 or the same game, new, for \$35. The Mathesons also shop for used games for their Nintendo Wii,





often trading in old ones for credit. "It's a rarity we'll buy a brand-new game," Diane Matheson says.

A friend in deed

Friends can make a difference in encouraging or curbing materialism. One of Jalajas' son's friends is an only child with a nice bedroom, a cell phone, an iPod, a big-screen TV in the basement and more. "He comes home and says, 'How come I have to share a room with my brother?'" Jalajas says. But a new friend has made Jalajas' son more appreciative of what he has. "He came home and said, 'Do you know he has to share a room with his three sisters?'" she says. "We need more of those friends."



CRITICAL THINKING CHECKLIST

 <div style="background-color: #f79646; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">PURPOSE</div>	<p>Part 1: <i>Answers will vary. Sample answers provided.</i></p> <p>1. What is the <i>purpose</i> of this piece of writing? Is it clear? <i>That the pressure for parents to give their kids cell phones has gotten out of hand and that parents should research for the best cell phone deals, have children help pay the expenses, and teach children good money habits. Yes, it is clear.</i></p>
 <div style="background-color: #8e7cc3; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">IDEAS</div>	<p>2. What <i>ideas</i> and <i>background information</i> are provided to support the purpose of this piece of writing? <i>She provides the history of how the demand for cell phones increased with peer pressure, describes the costs that can accrue, and provides ideas for supporting parents in teaching kids responsibility.</i></p>
 <div style="background-color: #f79646; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">SUPPORT</div>	<p>3. What <i>evidence</i> and <i>examples</i> are used to explain and develop the ideas that support the argument made in this piece of writing? Are the evidence and examples provided sufficient? <i>The author explains the types of peer pressure; costs for phones, calls, and texting; and specific examples from real families. Yes, she provides good support for her claims.</i></p>
 <div style="background-color: #2e9e90; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">ASSUMPTIONS BIASES</div>	<p>4. Are there unfounded <i>assumptions</i> or unreasonable <i>biases</i>? <i>No.</i></p>

Continued ►



CONCLUSIONS

5. Are the *conclusions* and *consequences* of the argument (the results of the argument taken to their furthest extreme) considered?

Yes, although she could say parents could say no completely to kids having cell phones.



POINT OF VIEW

6. Is the *point of view* clear and consistent, and have other points of view been considered?

Yes, and she also looks at the kids' point of view.



ANALYSIS

7. Using these critical thinking tools, *analyze* the overall structure of this essay and the strength of the author's argument, ideas, and support. Was the author successful in accomplishing her purpose? Why or why not?

She sets up the problem with details and a background history, and she provides specific examples, and finally, a plan for a solution. She was successful because she provides adequate, logical support for her arguments and purpose.

Part 2: What effect did knowing that you would have to answer critical thinking questions afterwards have on the way you read the article? *Answers will vary.*

Glossary of Critical Thinking Terms

Here is a glossary of critical thinking terms to help you in your reading and writing. Some of these terms have already been covered in the chapter, and some of them are new but will also help you in using your critical thinking skills.

ANALYSIS Analysis involves breaking down an idea and working out the meaning of the individual parts and how they relate to the whole. For example, if you were asked to analyze a paragraph or a poem, you would go through each line or sentence and figure out what each individual part is saying; then you'd look at the overall meaning and the connections between the parts. Think back to the Thinking Critically opener for this chapter: The picture may not have been completely clear until you carefully analyzed each part of the image and put together all the evidence.

ARGUMENT In most college writing, you are making an argument(s) and presenting a conclusion about a topic using reasons and evidence to convince your readers of your point. Arguments in writing can be casual and entertaining (such as arguing for the best place in town to go for a first date), or they can be more formal and structured (such as arguing for the need for a new science building on your campus).

ASSUMPTIONS An assumption is a belief or claim that you take for granted or that society, particular people, or an author you are reading takes for granted without providing or asking for evidence or proof to support the idea. Almost everything you believe and do is based on assumptions; for instance, you assume the sun will rise each morning and set each evening. Some, however, are more individual assumptions that you take for granted but that not everyone would agree with. It is important to learn to separate the assumptions that have a basis in fact from ones that don't. When reading other people's writing, look carefully for the assumptions, the ideas they take for granted, and consider whether these are an undeniable truth.

BIAS Bias is a particular viewpoint that you or an author has about an idea or a topic. All ideas or opinions reflect a bias. Sometimes you (or an author) are conscious of the biases in your ideas, and sometimes you are not. Having biases is not necessarily a bad thing (it is inevitable), but when one's biases are founded on misinformation or unrealistic assumptions they can get in the way of good critical thinking.

CONCLUSION A conclusion is the end result of an argument. It is the main point you make in your paper and should be the logical result of the reasons you provide to support your argument. When you read an author's argument, you are looking for their conclusion about the topic they have chosen and how well they have developed it using reasons, examples, and details as support.

EVALUATION Evaluation is looking at the strength of your reasoning, support, and conclusions (or those of another writer) and how well those ideas are developed and explained. Evaluate the arguments you put forth and how well you supported them with examples, reasons, and details. Also, consider the counterarguments—what people who argue for a different stand might say against your conclusion on the issue—and evaluate how well those arguments are constructed.

IMPLY/IMPLICATION To imply means to hint that something is so, to say it indirectly. For instance, if your aunt visits you and says, "My, aren't you looking filled out these days!" she may be implying, or hinting, that you need to go on a diet.

INFERENCE Inference involves tapping into your ability to read between the lines and figure out, or infer, what someone means based on clues in what they say or write. For instance, in the example above, your aunt has implied that you are getting fat, and you, in receiving those clues from her language, have inferred her meaning.

INTERPRETATION Interpretation involves decoding an idea so you understand its meaning. When you interpret an author's idea, you decode it using your own words. You need to interpret and understand an author's ideas before you can analyze their meanings and evaluate them.

OPINION Your opinion is what you (or another writer) believe about an idea, question, or topic. Opinion involves thinking about an idea or question and coming to your own conclusions about it. An opinion is based on weighing information and deciding where you stand on a question.

POINT OF VIEW Point of view in critical thinking refers to the perspective you are coming from in your reasoning and writing (or the perspective of the author you are reading). Be aware of your own point of view and the biases, assumptions, and opinions that make up that point of view, and be prepared to think of potential points of view that differ from yours (or from the views of the author you are reading).

PURPOSE The term purpose refers to the reason you are writing a paragraph or essay. It is what you (or the author you are reading) have set out to explain or prove to your readers. It is stated in the topic sentence of a paragraph and the thesis sentence of an essay.

SYNTHESIS Synthesis involves pulling together your ideas, and sometimes the ideas of others, in order to make or support an argument. Often, synthesis involves pulling together ideas from different authors that connect on a particular subject or argument to give a bigger picture.

Critical thinking skills are essential for developing good arguments in paragraphs and essays. You need to engage your critical thinking skills to evaluate the writing of others: classmates, authors you read for class, and sources you consult. As with any new language, the language of critical thinking gets easier with familiarity and practice. Training yourself to use critical thinking skills is challenging, but using these skills will significantly improve your reading and writing abilities and will become a treasured, lifelong habit.

The critical thinking terms and tools discussed in this chapter are used in different places throughout the book (watch for the icons), and you will need to use some or all of them in the writing assignments, reading selection activities, and grammar exercises. Use this chapter when you need a quick reminder of what a term means or how to apply it.

Applying these critical thinking terms and tools as you write helps you better understand and analyze what you read.

ACTIVITY 1-2 Critical Thinking Review and Practice

Directions: Answer the following questions. *Answers will vary.*

1. Reread the definition for critical thinking on page 2. Then write a definition of critical thinking using your own words.

2. List three assumptions you have made during the last three months related to events in your life. Then write a line or two about whether each assumption ended up being valid (true) or invalid (not true or unfounded) and why.

Assumption 1: _____

True or unfounded: _____

Assumption 2: _____

True or unfounded: _____

Assumption 3: _____

True or unfounded: _____

3. Describe your purpose for going to college. What do you hope to accomplish?

4. What is your point of view about the cost of attending college?

5. List any biases you think you had about college life before coming to college. Were they founded or not?

6. List two benefits you predict you will gain from learning and applying the critical thinking tools and terms explained in this chapter.

1.

2.

ACTIVITY 1-3 Applying Critical Thinking Terms to a Reading

Directions: Review the reading from Activity 1-1 on pages 9–13, “Does Johnny Really Need a Cell Phone?”, and then answer the questions that follow. Refer back to the glossary of critical thinking terms on pages 14–16 for help with this exercise. *Answers will vary. Sample answers provided.*

1. What **point of view** is this piece of writing told from? How do you know?

From the point of view of the author who is reporting on what parents go through when their kids get cell phones. I know because the reporter is using third person and giving examples from various families in her report.

2. What **assumptions** does the author make? Give an example and provide evidence to support it.

She assumes that most parents are overwhelmed by the costs of the new demand for cell phones from their teens. Examples include the bills Diane Matheson and “Ellen” paid for their children’s texting, downloading photos and horoscopes, and accessing the Web.

3. What **inferences** are made by the author in this excerpt? Explain.

She infers that the cell phone craze has placed a burden on parents. The examples show that parents are suffering because of their children’s demand for and use of cell phones.

4. What **conclusions** are reached through the details and comments in this excerpt?

She concludes that parents should research for the best cell phone deals, have children help pay the expenses, and teach children good money habits.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES REVIEW

LO1 What is critical thinking, and why is it important? (See pp. 2–3)

Critical thinking is actively thinking through and evaluating all the steps in your thinking process or the thinking process of others. It is essential for good analytical reading and clear, fair-minded analytical writing. You can use critical thinking skills to understand and evaluate the writings of others and to discover the strengths and weaknesses in their arguments. You can also use them to examine your own thinking, your biases and assumptions, and to evaluate the strength and logic of the reasons you provide for an argument.

LO2 What critical thinking terms are included in the Critical Thinking Toolbox, and what do they mean? (See pp. 3–8)

The **critical thinking terms** discussed in this chapter are *purpose* (your reason for writing), *ideas* (the ideas, personal knowledge, and information used to develop your purpose), *support* (facts, statistics, examples, and research used to support your reasoning), *assumptions and biases* (errors in your ideas or those of others that you need to be aware of when reading and writing), *conclusions* (the results of your argument), *point of view* (the way you see an issue), and *analysis* (breaking an idea into its individual parts to see how they relate and contribute to overall meaning).



For support in meeting this chapter's objectives, log in to www.mywritinglab.com and select **Critical Thinking: Responding to Text and Visuals**.